

The Richard Wood Store

HABS-NJ-269A

S.W. cor. Main Street and Bacons Neck Road (Willow St.)
Greenwich, Cumberland County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

Addendum to:
Richard Wood Store
Greenwich
Cumberland County
New Jersey

HABS NJ-269-A

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

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The Richard Wood Store
S.W. cor. Main Street and Bacons Neck Road (Willow St.)
Greenwich, Cumberland County, New Jersey

Owner: Lewis O. Austin

Date of Erection: Circa 1780-5

Architect:

Builder: Richard Wood 3rd (1755-1822)

Present Condition: Good, and still in operation

Number of Stories: One with garret and cellar

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone
masonry

Exterior walls - timber
frame; cedar clapboard
siding on outside

Interior walls - timber
frame boarded

Chimney - brick, carried
centrally on wood girder
of garret floor

Roof - gable, with cedar
shingle roofing over which
covered with tin later

Historical Data:

Richard Wood 3rd, the builder and first proprietor of this unique surviving example of a late 18th century village store, was born 7th of 2nd month 1755, elder son of Richard Wood 2nd and his first wife Hannah Davis, members of the Religious Society of Friends. The father (1728-1807) purchased

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and occupied the house which had been built in 1733 on the east side of the main street by Nicholas Gibbon in this same village of Greenwich on Cohansey Creek.* He was one of the judges of the court of Common Pleas for the County in 1786, and represented the County in the New Jersey Assembly in 1790.

Richard Wood 3rd, abovesaid, was at first a young school teacher, but went into business in the village as a partner in the firm of Sheppard, Daniels and Wood, but Sheppard soon bought out the two others interests stipulating their not setting up rival stores for three years. During that interval, Richard Wood built the store (here surveyed) at the southwest corner of Main and Willow Streets and carried on successfully there in business for several years. The land on which it stands was confirmed to him later under a devise in the will of his father, Richard Wood 2nd, dated 4 January 1802, "To my son Richard all my lots of land on the west side of Greenwich Street."

The date of erection of this building is reputedly 1773 according to the present owner, but it is clearly too early considering the fact that Richard Wood 3rd was but 18 years old in that year. Furthermore, the account of him cited above composed during the lifetime of his son Dr. George B. Wood and published 56 years ago, states that he built this store "about the same time" he erected the dwelling house on the opposite corner of Willow Street. That house, which we have surveyed as NJ-269, bears the dates 1785 and 1795 on the metal box heads of the rainwater conductors. Considering also the fact that this Richard Wood was married in December 1780 (at Woodbury to Ann Cooper of Gloucester County) when he was 25 years old, the date of this building would appear more likely as 1780-1785.

*Cushing and Sheppard "History of Gloucester, Salem, and Cumberland Counties", publ. 1883, page 687

Richard Wood 3rd, abovesaid, died in 1822, and in the subsequent division of his real estate among his heirs in 1828, award was made "to Horatio C. Wood, lot no. 3, called the Store Lot" at the southwest corner of the main street and Bacons Neck Road, in the village of Greenwich. By a deed of 29 December 1870 Horatio C. Wood last named above conveyed the same store and its .78 acre lot to Samuel Lawrence who by his will of 15 December 1880 devised all his real estate to his wife Emily S. Lawrence and any part remaining after her death to his niece Elizabeth B. Fithian. The widow by her will of 17 May 1915 confirmed to the niece all the estate, and the latter by her deed of 8 May 1924 sold the store and its lot to John Ward Tomlinson. He conveyed it to Owen M. Butler on 3 February 1926, from whom it passed to Emlen Wood on 15 December 1928 and the latter conveyed it to Lewis Oakford Austin, the present owner (1937), on 5 February 1930.

This venerable emporium stands today practically as built originally with its leanto shed probably added at the rear end not long afterward. The details of the posts and cornice of the porch indicate their being of a date in the first quarter of the 19th century, possibly a replacement of originals. The multipaned sash shown in the windows on the survey drawings are restorations, these being discovered stored in the garret of this building since they were replaced by modern ones.

Bibliography:

A search of title by O. F. Benjamin,
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(FHW)